

January 9, 2009

Senator Joe Balyeat, Chair
Business, Labor and Economic Affairs Committee
Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Re: SB 89

Dear Senator Balyeat and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Missoula Community Leadership Team, I am writing to express our support for SB 89, sponsored by Senator Tropila. The bill would eliminate the sunset date for the Primary Sector Business Workforce Training Act. This is a very simple proposal, but one that has profound implications. It would send a strong message that Montana is indeed ready to help businesses create jobs.

We helped to bring DIRECTV to Missoula. The company received \$1.9 million in funding from the Primary Sector Business Workforce Training Act. As of February of this year, the State of Montana broke even on that investment. Every dollar of personal income tax paid by employees of the Missoula customer service and tech support center is new revenue to the state. To the company's credit, they accepted assurances from the state that funding from the workforce training program would be available in the following biennium. Other states, however, made binding commitments that were not contingent upon subsequent authorization of the program.

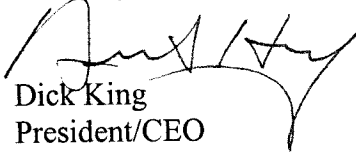
Passage of SB 89 would enable Montana to convey a clear message that the program is ongoing. It will still be subject to appropriation approval every two years, but at least the program itself is authorized.

The Missoula Community Leadership Team includes representation from the following organizations with business membership: Missoula Chamber of Commerce; the Missoula Downtown Association, the Missoula Building Industry Association, the Missoula Conventions and Visitors Bureau and the Missoula Organization of Realtors.

The boards of directors of each of these organizations have met and endorsed a list of legislative priorities developed by the Leadership Team. Removal of the sunset on the workforce training program is one of these priorities. The board of directors of our organization also voted to support this list of legislative priorities.

We urge your support for SB 89.

Sincerely,



Dick King
President/CEO

Cc: Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce
Missoula Building Industry Association
Missoula Organization of Realtors
Missoula Downtown Association
Missoula Convention and Visitors Bureau